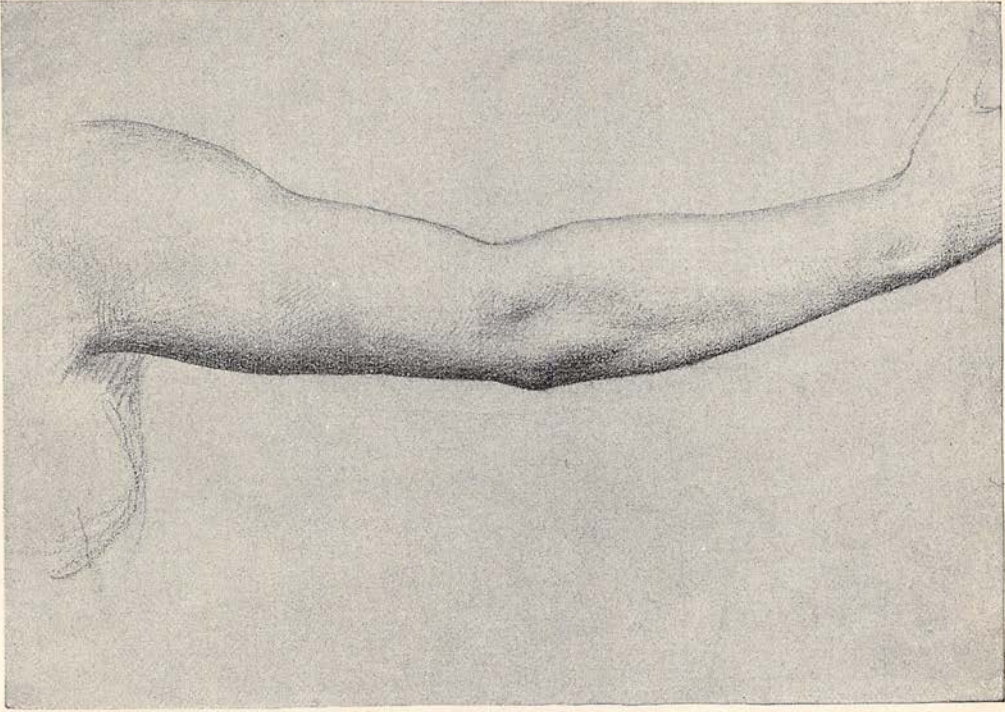


## CHATS WITH FAMOUS PAINTERS.



STUDY OF ARM FROM LIFE, BY J. P. LAURENS.

OF all earth's children the happiest are the artist and the novelist, for they are creators of men. One of them makes the body, the other the soul.

The studio of an artist is a workshop. There sits the worker, the Prometheus, the maker of men — Gérôme in a gray blouse. Before him stands the man of marble, his own creation, spiritual, immortal. Just beyond is the model, nature's creation, fleshly, vital. "Since Gérôme has turned sculptor, we understand what he means," declares a brother artist. He wishes to create men and women according to his ideals and his temperament. Indeed, to see "The Death of Cæsar," the "Pollice Verso," and the "Phryne Before the Judges," you would never guess the secret of the great master, the foremost historical painter, director of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. That secret is to work as nature works. You cannot get beyond her. "Le bon dieu dans la nature a fait tout" (the good Lord in nature has made all things), he says. "Measure the natural object, construct one like it. Do you see that tiger's head?" he con-

tinues, putting his hand upon a superb work of art adorning a newel. "I measured the skull of that tiger, I measured the jaws, I measured the teeth; then I made my skeleton exactly on those measurements, filled it up—*et voilà tout!*"

"But, after all, it looks rather finer than a real tiger," you venture.

"After you have done this, you may clothe your work with the poetry of your own soul," replies the master. "Find a beautiful thing in nature, measure it, construct your skeleton; next, get well those bold yet lovely outlines—then you cannot fail."

You ask to see the "beautiful thing," and he goes to a drawer, and carefully displays finely executed sketches of certainly the ugliest beast on earth, the camel. There are dozens of drawings of this creature, of every part, in every attitude, the lips, the long legs, the hump, the knees, the feet, everything studied with the utmost care, the utmost patience. Not Leonardo with the "Mona Lisa," or with the head of Christ in "The Last Supper," could have taken more



STUDY OF HEAD BY J. P. LAURENS, FOR "THE ARCHWAY OF STEEL."

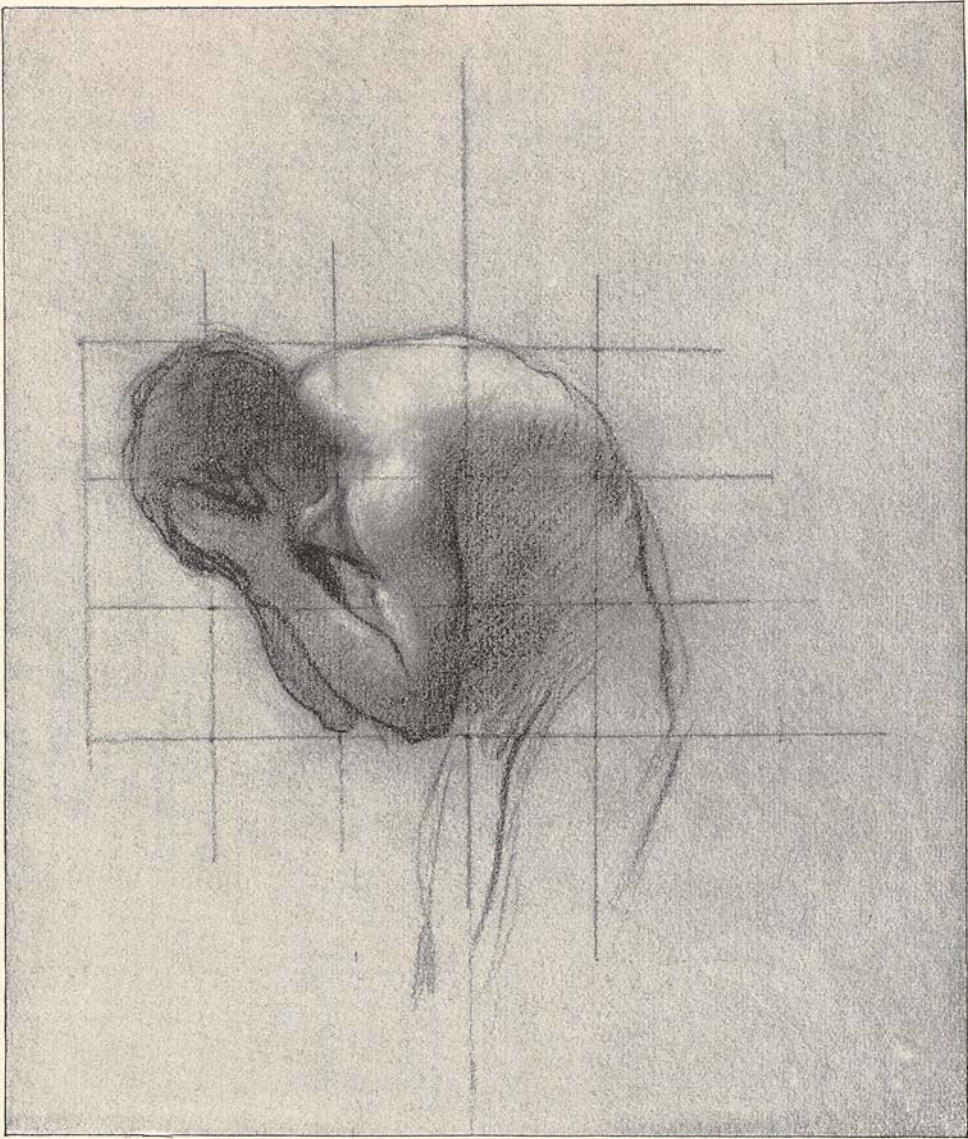
pains. What a lesson is here! O brilliant young impressionists, who dash off a large canvas in a morning, and produce a stunning Mexican girl radiant in soft gold and bewildering violet, know that your master is patiently studying the knees of camels with a sharp lead-pencil; measuring skeletons inch by inch and line by line — the strongest artist in the world humbly confessing his weakness: "Le bon dieu dans la nature a fait tout." "Painting and sculpture," says Gérôme, "are the same thing." What will the green-gold and violet school say to this?

Not yet dead are the old traditions of classic and romantic. J. P. Laurens might be called the antipode to Gérôme, as Delacroix was to Ingres. "I am most impatient," he declares. "I do not really draw; I grasp what I want in

color. Look, there are my drawings." And verily, the great studio is literally lined with color-sketches a foot square or so, all done with a brush, not a line to be seen — but what passion and fire! Here is a snow-white arm on a dead black ground with a tiny patch of blood-red drapery. This arm may be alluring, threatening, shrinking; the artist will make you feel it one way or another, at his will. Here is a closed fist that says "impotent rage" plainer than a thousand words could speak it. Here from a face gleams out haughty contempt, yonder is a dying groan, and over it hangs a nymph's song, and all around you are studies for the grand *plafond* of the Odéon, and for the "Death of Ste. Geneviève" in the Panthéon. The artist talks freely for half an hour, and shows



STUDY OF DRAPED FIGURE AND OF HANDS, BY BOUGUEREAU.

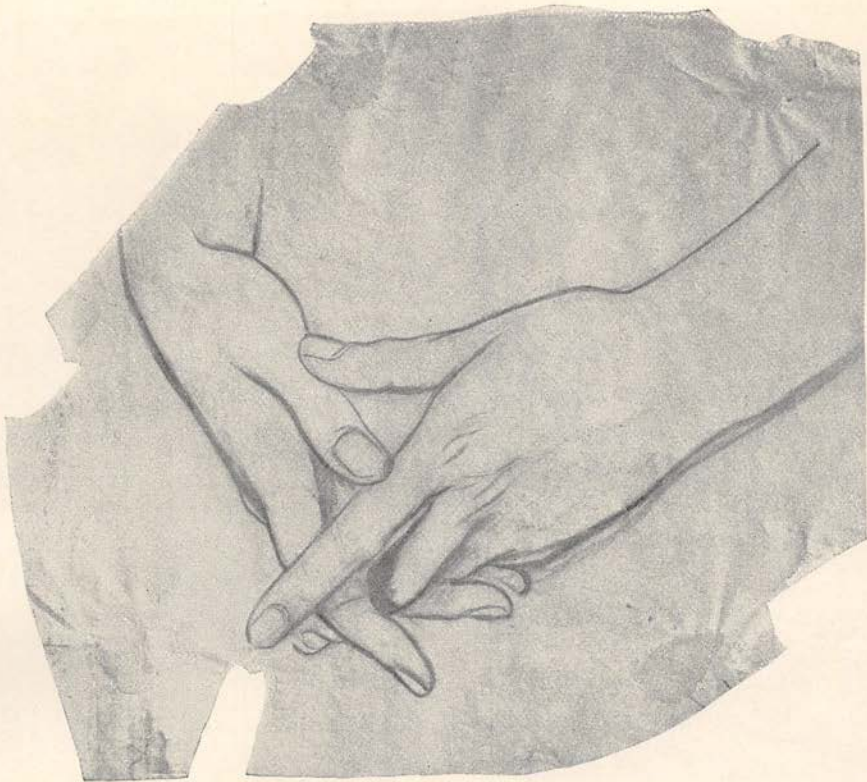


STUDY BY PUVION DE CHAVANNES.

all his work. Who has not met the master-magician Laurens has not met the most delightful man in all Paris.

Let us make another call. The house beautiful — that is to say, the workshop — of another creator, the most popular painter in the world, Bouguereau, is only twenty feet from that of Laurens, just across the driveway. "Entrez," cries a voice. On the left in the studio stand two patrons; on the right a young aspirant with his picture, come for the master's friendly criticism. In the midst is the robust and genial Bouguereau, working steadily with pencil and paper, a charming young Italian girl kneeling

close before him, clad in a peplum and holding a basket. He goes straight on with his work, keeping up a running fire of conversation, satisfying and gratifying all his visitors at once. "Do you like that pose? I have put models into every pose in the world, I believe — except that of the 'Night' of Michelangelo. I can't get that pose; nobody can take it. Is it hard to find good models? Yes, for the face; fine forms are common enough. We find one model with good arms, another with fine legs; but good faces are rare, very rare." Naturally, at this you inspect the face of the little figure with the basket, and you see that this time the



STUDIES OF HANDS BY J. J. LEFEBVRE.

artist has indeed found his beautiful face, and you see also whence it came. There are the features immortalized by Raphael in his Florentine Madonnas — a Tuscan maiden is before you. Eugénie Lucchese is her name, fourteen years her age, Lucca her city, as her name implies; and you perceive with delight that Bou-

guereau has discovered what you or I, mere travelers and observers, have also found out, namely, that the true celestial loveliness — beauty's very self, if you will — shines forth in the faces of the little maids of the country towns of Tuscany. Study the most excellent works of Bouguereau as well as the most exquisite of



STUDY OF "DANCING FAUN," BY SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON.

Raphael with this key. They will repay the trouble. Be not hasty, O critic, in judging of the most abused painter of to-day. Do you think he paints for popularity or for money? Ask him what is required to make an artist. In answering you he lets you see clearly his own mainspring of action. "Have an ideal of perfect beauty, and reach it or break your neck." Probably as few know the secret of Bouguereau as that of Gérôme. Has he found his ideal? I do not know. There is a picture now upon his easel which the world will see next year. It is a single figure, a "Venus in the Shell." But I will not anticipate. "I work every day of my life from sunrise to sunset," he says. "I am perfectly happy. An artist lives with the divine; every moment he discovers new beauties—beauties in nature that others do not see." With this we take our leave.

If you would catch Puvis de Chavannes, the loftiest French painter, as Bouguereau is the most popular, you must call at daybreak, as did the young men of old upon Socrates.

"We have now great artists in America, M. de Chavannes. Americans now also have culture and taste."

"I have just been made aware of that fact."

"Ah! May we ask how?"

"The trustees and architects of the Boston

Public Library have just offered me two hundred and fifty thousand francs to decorate the staircase of that edifice."

"How is it that you paint paradise so perfectly? Have you ever been there?"

"I do not know. It is unconscious."

"Do you paint from your drawings?"

"Yes; I draw in lead-pencil from life, and then paint from my drawings."

This method, common to most artists, is condemned by others. Bonnat never makes drawings at all, but poses his model, dips his brush into paint, and plunges in at once. Lefebvre makes hasty, tentative sketches of parts only, to get the idea of an attitude or feature; sometimes, however, penciling two or three of these one right upon the other, by means of transparent paper; but his motto is, "Seize nature alive."

"Yes; and how well he does seize her!" replies Sir Frederick Leighton, on hearing of the remark. The scene is again changed. We are now in the studio of the foremost man upon the English side of the Channel, and we leave his precincts and his presence with a sense that here, as in the case of Gérôme, the honor has been rightly placed. The workshop of the president of the Royal Academy does not impress you as a veritable workshop, as does that of Gérôme, nor does it suggest a luxurious villa like



SECOND STUDY FOR "SOLITUDE," BY SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON.



STUDY FOR "LA CIGALE," BY ALBERT MAIGNAN.





THREE STUDIES FOR AN ANGEL'S HEAD MADE BY J. E. LENEPVEU FOR "THE VISION OF JOAN OF ARC" IN THE PANTHEON.

that of Alma Tadema, nor is it a picture-gallery like that of another artist, nor yet a bric-à-brac shop like so many. It seems the apartment of a virtuoso. In every square foot of space there hangs or lies some work of art ancient or modern, peculiarly rare, choice, lovely. One feasts the eye perpetually upon forms of beauty. Works of Phidias and Michelangelo predominate. The Pergamon frieze, the Hermes of Praxiteles, and the Nike of Samothrace are there. These masterpieces of Hellas are not behind us; they are ahead of us. They open up new vistas in art.

"What are your most cherished principles of art?" we ask the president.

"Sincerity is the first principle," answers Sir Frederick Leighton; "an earnest desire to do your very best, and no compromise. You must know well what others have done," he continues. "You must express your own life as the Greeks expressed their life" (this for the third principle). "Express it in terms of beauty, for that is the language which an artist speaks. Selection is necessary," he adds, "as the next, the fifth, principle."

In every hidden nook of Sir Frederick's room are portfolios filled with superb chalk-

drawings. We find three successive studies for that wonderful figure "Solitude." Here, indeed, is a picture; here is an all-round masterpiece. It has power, it has breadth, it has softness, it has spirituality,—the great cardinal qualities, any one of which well known or mastered would make the fame and fortune of painter or sculptor,—and who knows or has mastered them all to-day but the creator of "Solitude?"

Before you leave Paris see Albert Maignan. He has two of these qualities. How well he weaves the warp of softness and grace into the woof of angularity and force—and sets his figures, as it were, to the music of Shelley! Do you know the "Birth of the Pearl" and the "Voices of the Tocsin?"

Lenepveu has the spiritual quality. Others have sought the Joan of Arc, Lenepveu has found her. Would you like to know how this artist makes an angel? He poses three models one after the other, and draws the face of each upon thin paper superposed, one directly upon the other, selecting from each of the three faces the most angelic, and eliminating the most earthly, features. Thus are angels created in the year of grace, 1893, in the Paris workshops.

Wallace Wood.

## FLEUR-DE-LIS.

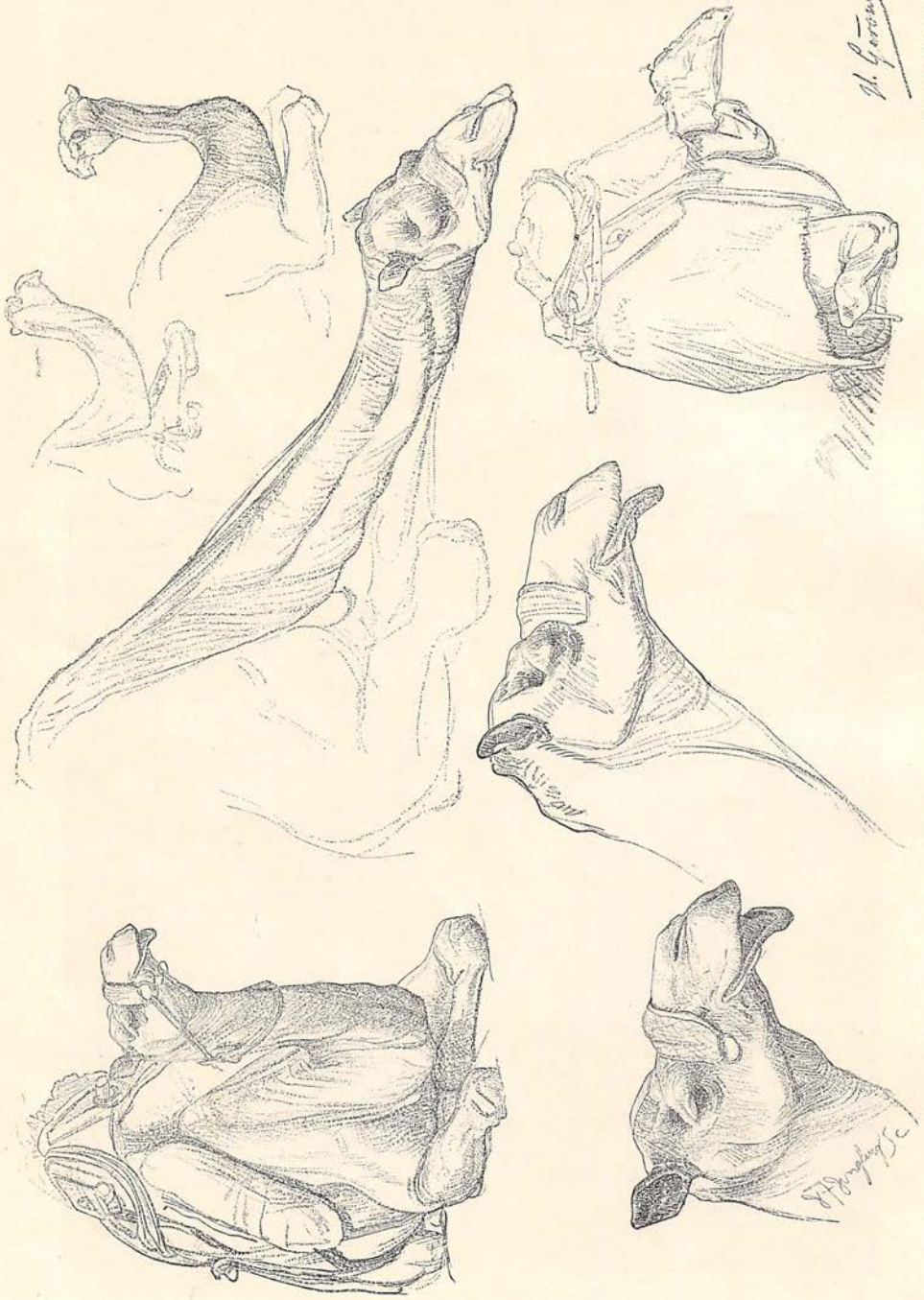


FLEUR-DE-LIS had been christened Marie Hortense Amélie Dupont; Marie for her mother, Hortense and Amélie in honor of the two vicomtesses de Rastignac, sole survivors of the proud old Royalist family in whose service Marie's mother and grandmother had lived, and into whose service Marie herself had been born. But when *la petite* Marie Hortense Amélie was a mere blossom of babyhood, she forsook the name that the priest had given her as he touched her downy head with the holy water, and chose instead to be called Fleur-de-lis, a name, in sooth, much better suited to a noble daughter of the Rastignacs than to a child of Marie Dupont, maker of tissue-paper flowers, and Pierre Dupont, street musician.

Fleur-de-lis had first opened her eyes in a very humble chamber, but it was large enough to hold a deal of sweet content, which grew all the sweeter when she came to share it. There were only two rooms for father, mother, and child, and these were in a dreary tenement-house; for Pierre Dupont, a stranger in a

strange land, was having a desperate struggle with poverty. On being discharged from the hospital where he had passed through the dangerous illness that left him a maimed and broken man, he had to begin the world all over again, and begin it single-handed, in very truth. There were few things to which he could turn his one hand; one of them was the crank of a street piano, and in a modest example of that modern instrument of torture he accordingly invested the last of his savings. He was much too good for it, but by regarding it distinctly as a hated object which should be discarded the moment something better appeared, he mastered his aversion, and by wheeling it through the streets from morning till night he managed to live; for there were always people who wanted to hear it, and others who did not, so that between the two classes he scraped together enough for his frugal needs.

Marie was young and pretty and loyal, and when affairs were most desperate she offered to take the baby Fleur-de-lis and accompany her husband, gathering the pennies in a tambourine, while he ground so-called music from the piano with the left arm that grew so weary



*J. L. Gerome*

ENGRAVED BY J. F. JUNGLING.

A STUDY OF CAMELS, BY J. L. GEROME.